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Ross Terrill, Ph.D.
Research Associate
Fairbank Center for East Asian Research
Harvard University

Clarity about China's efforts to influence our foreign policy requires clarity about China's goals. Beijing's foreign policy seeks to maximize stability at home; sustain China's impressive economic growth; maintain peace in China's complicated geographic situation; "regain" territories that in many cases are disputed by others; and reduce U.S. influence in East Asia.

Three of these goals - protecting the economy, maintaining a peaceful environment, and "regaining" lost territories - are relatively transparent. China's methods of pursuing them are conventional and often reasonable: military preparedness; diplomatic engagement; economic muscle; the soft power of China's appeal as a respected civilization.

However the other two goals - control at home and blunting U.S. influence - are more problematic. They are not expressed directly by Beijing and they are often pursued by devious methods.

Insecure about domestic control, Beijing supports the status quo in North Korea and Central Asia, because alternative scenarios with greater freedom for the people involved might threaten Beijing's hold on ethnic minorities in northeast China near the Korea border, and in Xinjiang on the borders of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Again insecure at home, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) treats any philosophic heterodoxy as a political threat. This happened in the case of Falungong, an organization of semi-Buddhist health and exercise practitioners, stemming from China but now international. Beijing made an unnecessary enemy of them - Falungong has no political program – and Chinese diplomats from Sydney to New York try to thwart Falungong's international activities, interfering in democratic societies to do so.

China envisages replacing the U.S. (and Japan) as the chief influence in East Asia. On a few global issues where Chinese and American interests coincide, or Beijing cannot effectively resist U.S. policy, Beijing goes along with the U.S. or opposes Washington with a limp wrist. Such was the case with the first Gulf War. But in Asia at present the

Chinese leaders seek to exclude the U.S. They try, so far with little success, to drive a wedge between Japan and the U.S. They whisper in Australian ears that Canberra would be better off looking only to Asia and not across the Pacific. And so on.

In December 2005 a milestone was reached as an East Asia Summit met in Malaysia with the U.S. absent, thanks in large part to Chinese maneuvers. Not particularly successful at Kuala Lumpur, Beijing nevertheless seeks an East Asian Community organization lacking the U.S. and with Japan to the fore only if it behaves as Beijing thinks it should.

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A major method for Beijing to pursue its two problematic goals is manipulating news and views within China and beyond. If it can skew the truth about Korea, Xinjiang, or Tibet, say, it can affect world opinion and thus discredit American Korea policy, Uyghurs who seek political freedom, or the Dalai Lama. If it can paint the U.S. as an exploitative, pre-emptive bully, unsuited for a leading role in East Asia - especially in private forums or by indirection - it prepares the ground for an eventual Chinese edition of the Monroe Doctrine in Asia.

Beijing manipulates the view of the U.S. and other matters for 1.3 billion people. In this party-state power and "truth" are fused together. Marxism-Leninism is the only permitted public philosophy. The regime is a construct from above; it is not legitimated by elections from below.

Absent in China are independence of the press and public debate about basic foreign policy issues. A few years ago "People's Daily" faced a sagging circulation that made its self-image as China's number one newspaper difficult to maintain. China had more than a billion people but only 800,000 copies of "People's Daily" were being "sold." By comparison, in the U.S., with a quarter of the PRC's population, the Wall Street Journal sells nearly 2 million copies a day and USA Today sells more than 2 million. Worse, for Beijing, most of the 800,000 copies were not being bought by actual people paying out of their own pockets, but by work units of the party-state.

The CCP, which supervises "People's Daily," did not meet the problem by permitting the paper to offer lively and objective stories. Instead, a directive went out to work units across the land, requiring extra subscriptions to "People's Daily." In ten days the circulation doubled to 1.6 million (according to government figures). The officials felt better. Such is the nature of the Chinese media. All newspapers in China are official. All are licensed by the government. The editors of all of them are appointed by the party-state.

Chinese come to the U.S. and read scathing criticisms of President Bush in American newspapers. Americans go to China and never read a word of criticism of President Hu Jintao in "China Daily." The Chinese state creates a lock-step view of

events within China and the world that is completely different from our own marketplace of ideas. As a result, when a foreign policy crisis occurs, our task is made more difficult.

In May 1999, NATO bombers mistook the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade for another structure and killed three Chinese. The Chinese public was angry, as for weeks before Chinese readers and viewers had been told of "American imperialism's" vicious assault on innocent Serbia. Crowds descended on the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, hurling missives and shouting denunciations of the "deliberate attack by American imperialism on the property and lives of People's China." The Chinese demonstrating against the U.S. were bussed to their appointed sites by Chinese government organizations. President Clinton had made a televised apology to Beijing for the assault, but no hint of Clinton's words was given to the Chinese public as the demonstrations raged. The Chinese media continued to present the bombing as a calculated attack on China. After four days the Clinton apology was conveyed (in brief) to the Chinese public. The hose of protest had been turned on. Now it was turned off.

An even less justified piece of political theater occurred in May 2001 when a U.S. reconnaissance plane and a Chinese fighter collided and the American EP-3e limped in emergency to a Chinese airport. Beijing spoke of the Chinese pilot as a lamb mauled by the wolves of imperialism, rather than a careless pilot who made a mistake. The Chinese public were led to believe American imperialists had victimized a Chinese young man. That Beijing after two weeks changed its tune, released the American EP-3e crew, and stopped talking about wolves and imperialism was an act of raison d'etat that had nothing to do with the truth of the matter.

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Asymmetry marks access and the atmosphere surrounding information in the U.S. and China. Some 100,000 Chinese students are on our campuses, enormously more than the number of Americans on Chinese campuses, and they have extraordinary access to information in this country, whereas many sensitive materials are withheld from Americans in China.

Hundreds of prominent Americans who know a lot about China are pro-Beijing and critical of U.S China-policy in public statements. That is their right. But there is no equivalent community of U.S specialists within China that is pro-American and criticizes Beijing's policy toward the U.S - nor could there be.

The professions in China are not autonomous as they are in the U.S. As well as journalists, professors, most lawyers, and clergy for licensed religious organizations are all beholden to the party-state. Hence journalism exchanges between China and the U.S. are flawed projects since Chinese journalists are not independent. Chinese judges are not in a relation to society and the state comparable to U.S. judges (a few Chinese lawyers

are independent like American lawyers, but they are not the type Beijing chooses for law exchanges with the USA).

Time and again an American leader speaks in China after a promise from Beijing that the remarks will be transmitted unaltered to the Chinese public, only to find that sensitive parts have been cut. "People's Daily," reporting the joint press conference between President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin in 1998 omitted Clinton's words on freedom, Tibet, and the Tiananmen tragedy of 1989. When Clinton went to church and spoke to a congregation of 2000, "People's Daily" did not mention that event. Nor did the paper offer the barest word of Clinton's free-wheeling speech at Beijing University the previous day. In Beijing in July 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell's TV interview was eviscerated to omit his criticisms of the PRC human rights record, in breach of an agreement with the U.S. Embassy that Powell's remarks would be relayed in full. Vice-President Cheney's speech in Shanghai in April 2004 was gutted of key passages about democracy after a promise to transmit it in full. And so on. The Chinese people cannot know what they do not hear. They are unaware of how much they do not know.

Just as Beijing uses divide-and-rule at the national level to split the U.S. from its allies, it does the same at the level of the individual writer, journalist, or academic. The Chinese try to pick favorites and isolate critics of Beijing. They play favorites among those Americans who are involved with China. They dangle access (as they do with businessmen); they intimidate potential critics.

Let me illustrate Beijing's cherry-picking of coverage in an American magazine.

In the mid-1990s the "National Geographic" invited me to write an article on the Three Gorges Dam Project. I had done quite a number of articles for the magazine. Some months after the photographer and I began work on the project, Beijing refused me a visa to travel to the dam area and along the river. The "National Geographic" was in a bind. I could not write their article; but they wanted an article. Inevitably they chose another writer to whose views Beijing would have less objection. So Beijing won a quiet victory that remained unknown to the tens of millions of readers of the published article.

Another Chinese method is to plant certain themes in American minds by endless repetition and subtle infiltration. "The U.S is trying to hold China back" says Beijing. Actually, taking 25% of China's exports seems a strange way of holding China back. "A Cold War mentality in the U.S. is damaging U.S.-China relations" says Beijing. In truth, North Korea, China's only ally, is the conspicuous Stalinist relic of the Cold War in East Asia, gravely unsettling to Northeast Asia. "Japanese militarism is the great danger in Asia" says Beijing. Never mind that China's is the fastest growing military of any major country in the world, and that the PRC has fought wars on five flanks in the last half-century, during which period Japan's military has killed not one non-Japanese in combat.

To help plant these themes, Beijing draws into its sphere Americans with good knowledge of China and readiness to agree with Chinese policies. All the statements

listed above are embraced by more than a few prominent business and media and academic figures involved with China.

In the "New York Times" Jane Perlez and others have repeatedly written long articles about how China is edging the U.S. aside in Asia. "More than 50 years of American dominance in Asia is subtly but unmistakably eroding," Perlez wrote in a typical piece in October 2003. Choosing interviewees to fit her editorial theme, she skewered Bush's Asia policies. She was quite wrong about American decline, as the Tsunami aftermath alone made plain three months later. But Perlez said exactly what Beijing wished her to say. The Chinese lap up such statements, and share them with ASEAN, European, and other diplomats, pointing out that even the most intelligent Americans see China edging the U.S. aside.

Urban China today is essentially a product of foreign money. Those Chinese who have not yet benefited from this new wealth, whether hinterlanders, migrant workers, farmers, or laid-off factory workers see their Communist leaders in cahoots with the money-men of the capitalist world and with an "international community" of favored foreign China-specialists. To a poor rural Chinese, a tourist hotel in a big city is a badge of an unholy alliance between foreigners and the CCP. Inside these hotels, the jet-setting American professor and the foreign investor, conferring with Chinese officials over a banquet of shark's fin soup and cognac, can be seen as ganging up with the Chinese party-state against hundreds of millions of Chinese people - and Tibetans and Muslims in Xinjiang - who live in far more modest economic conditions and also in political darkness.

New is the amount of money China has available for its manipulation. The corruption of power was familiar in earlier years of the PRC; the corruption of money becomes more and more evident today. Beijing has become bold with its favors and open wallet. A few years ago at the Chinese side's request, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and Qinghua University in Beijing negotiated about a possible joint journalism program. Qinghua University is known for science and technology and has no background at all in journalism. Qinghua clearly wanted to get a foot in the door with Harvard. The main argument used by the envoy from Beijing in the preliminary meeting I attended was that many leaders in the Chinese government were graduates of Qinghua. Influence at the top was available; favors were possible; Qinghua had money for the project.

It is true that Beijing's behavior in the face of the international flow of information has improved in the post-Mao era. Soon after President Nixon's visit to China in 1972, when the "New York Times" and the newly-established Chinese UN Mission were discussing the possible opening of a Times bureau in Beijing, China demanded as a condition that the "New York Times" henceforth accept no advertising from Taiwan or the KMT political party that then ruled Taiwan. Around the same time a planned Harvard faculty trip to China in 1973 was canceled just before it took place

because one of our members, John King Fairbank, wrote a favorable review of "Prisoner of Mao," an account of life in a Chinese prison. Mao was still alive at the time of these two incidents. After Mao died there came many changes.

Economic issues replaced class struggle as the apparent priority. The door was opened to selected foreign influences. The whim of the top leader was supplemented with some rules and regulations. By the 1990s the Chinese bureaucracy was impressively professionalized, benefiting Chinese and Americans both. A concern to protect the U.S. market for Chinese goods led to some fresh restraints in Chinese foreign policy.

But Mao's departure did not remove the Leninist basis of the Chinese regime. It was under Deng Xiaoping and still is paternalistic and repressive; it practices divide-and-rule as before. President Clinton, while in office, twice referred to China as a "former Communist country." This only sets us up for disillusionment.

That error occurred before in the 1940s in Yanan and Chongqing. "Mao is not a real Communist' said the China experts of the time. "He's just an agrarian reformer." Now the cry goes up, "Hu Jintao is not a real communist; he's a reformer." It was a mistake in the 1940s and it is a mistake today to miss the underlying Leninism because of its pretty disguise. True, Hu Jintao is no longer very Marxist; Beijing has moved away from class struggle to mercantilist economic development. But Hu Jintao is a Leninist; he's in power as head of a Leninist party; and Leninism is about control and manipulation.

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In 1992 I met up with a former leader of the Tiananmen democracy movement, Shen Tong, then a student at Boston University, on his first trip back to China since the tragedy. He traveled unhindered for several weeks, but in Beijing he was detained in the middle of the night at his mother's home. A phone call from the family reached me at the Jianguo Hotel just before the police cut phone lines at the house. Later that morning, Shen Tong was due to address an audience, including foreign journalists, in a reserved ballroom of the Jianguo Hotel.

Around 9 A.M., as I began to explain to the assembled crowd why Shen Tong was not there, and handed out, in Chinese and English, a text of remarks he had prepared on democracy and China, hotel staff and plain clothes security men broke up the gathering. Pushing scores of people away, they said the meeting was canceled, we were violating the law, literature may not be distributed, and the Jianguo Hotel was being threatened by chaos. Plainclothes men shuttered me in my room. Security officers of Beijing City arrived to grill me. Alerted by the foreign press, a diplomat from the U.S. Embassy arrived. With physical assistance from a Japanese cameraman, the diplomat was pulled into my room.

"You held an illegal press conference," said a security officer. "You distributed some documents." You are a "splittist" who has infiltrated democratic ideas into China,

and "hurt the feelings of the Chinese people," said another officer. "What if Chinese went to America, the way you have come to China, and introduced materials hurtful to the feelings of the American people?" The U.S. diplomat snapped: "Chinese in the U.S. may say and write anything they wish."

After two hours a deal was struck. I would be released if I left the Jianguo Hotel and went to the U.S. Embassy. The first thing I did was to prepare and fax an excerpted version of Shen Tong's remarks on democracy and send them to the "New York Times" - which published them as an Oped next morning. Still, around midnight, a swarm of public security agents arrived at my hotel room. "You are being expelled from China."

Shen Tong, 14 weeks later, was released and dispatched back to Boston. His request to stay in China and stand trial for his "crimes" was turned down. The Qing Dynasty in 1727 forbad Chinese from living outside of China. The PRC compels outspoken Chinese to live outside China.

I have been back to China many times since that incident, but Beijing wins a victory with such repression and expulsion. Friends of the expelled one in the government are henceforth afraid to meet with him - at least in China. Happily, there is now an unofficial China as well as an official China, and many Chinese in business or the arts are not intimidated in this way.

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What should we do about the situation? Our overall China policy can (and currently does) blend full engagement with participation in preserving an equilibrium in East Asia that discourages Beijing from expansionist policies. No contradiction exists between these twin stances. There are two China's, after all: a command economy that sags, and a free economy that soars; a Communist Party that scratches for a raison d'etre, and 1.3 billion individuals with private agendas. Being wary of authoritarian China while engaging with emerging China is a logical dualism.

We should avoid wishful thinking about the nature of the Chinese state. We should continue to be a beacon of freedom in our own conduct and rhetoric. We should be aware of the asymmetry in cultural exchanges with the PRC. We should resist the Chinese divide-and-rule policies by a stance of solidarity with those whom Beijing singles out for exclusion. We should talk back to the CCP every time they mock the freedoms of the U.S. or deny the repression of their own rule - just as did the U.S. diplomat who snapped to security officers in my room at the Jianguo Hotel: "Chinese in the U.S. may say and write anything they wish." I worry at times that authoritarian China has an advantage over the U.S. It can take the long view, hide plans it does not want revealed, pull the strings of Chinese public opinion, set the agenda of international organizations while doing little to implement their decisions, win access to American society that far outstrips our access to Chinese society, and deceive many non-Chinese about all this by its practice of political theater.

Yet ultimately an authoritarian regime is not strong. The average life-span of the European Leninist regimes that collapsed between 1989 and 1991 was only a few decades; the Chinese Communist regime is now 57 years old, 17 years short of the life-span of the Soviet Union, the longest running authoritarian regime of modern times. Democracies sound raucous, but the U.S. and Australia, to take two examples, have been stable for a period that runs into centuries. The oxygen of freedom prevents many evils. Our quarrel over the manipulation of news and views is not with Chinese culture, or the Chinese people, but with the Communist party-state. It manipulates and lies because that was its political upbringing. It strokes the feathers of sycophants and ditches independent spirits because that has been the Leninist way in every single country where a Communist Party has held a monopoly of political power.

In our ultimate optimism about freedom's spread, we cannot overlook that the great civilization at the heart of Asia is still spearheaded by a regime that resents American power and stymies some of the finest traits of China's culture and people.